



NAPSNet Daily Report Tuesday, March 29, 2005

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report Tuesday, March 29, 2005", NAPSNet Daily Report, March 29, 2005, <https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-tuesday-march-29-2005/>

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I. United States

- 1. [US on DPRK Nuclear Talks](#)
- 2. [US on DPRK Human Rights and Nuclear Talks](#)
- 3. [Sino-DPRK Relations](#)
- 4. [ROK on Inter-Korean Talks](#)
- 5. [Inter - Korean Economic Cooperation](#)
- 6. [ROK on Aid to the DPRK](#)
- 7. [DPRK on Nuclear Program](#)
- 8. [DPRK Economics](#)
- 9. [DPRK Bird Flu Outbreak](#)
- 10. [ROK on DPRK Bird Flu Outbreak](#)
- 11. [PRC on DPRK Bird Flu Outbreak](#)
- 12. [DPRK on Agricultural Aid](#)
- 13. [DPRK on Foreign Aid](#)
- 14. [ROK on DPRK Human Rights](#)
- 15. [UN on DPRK Defectors](#)
- 16. [Russo-DPRK Wildlife Protection](#)
- 17. [US Troop Realignment](#)
- 18. [ROK on Japanese-ROK Territorial Dispute](#)
- 19. [DPRK on ROK-Japanese Territorial Dispute](#)
- 20. [Japan on Territorial Disputes](#)
- 21. [Sino-Japanese Territorial Dispute](#)
- 22. [PRC, ROK on Japanese UNSC Bid](#)
- 23. [US on ROK-Japanese Relations](#)
- 24. [Asia-Pacific Environmental Cooperation Initiative](#)
- 25. [Australian-US Relations](#)

26. [Cross Strait Relations](#)
27. [US on PRC Military Expansion](#)
28. [US on PRC Human Rights](#)

[Preceding NAPSNet Report](#)

I. United States

1. US on DPRK Nuclear Talks

The Associated Press ("U.S. QUESTIONS N.KOREA COMMITMENT TO TALKS", 2005-03-29) reported that a top US official on Tuesday questioned the DPRK's commitment to six-nation nuclear disarmament talks but said Washington would never abandon the process. Christopher Hill, the chief US negotiator in the multinational talks, told reporters in Manila that conditions imposed by the DPRK for the resumption of negotiations had stalled a "very serious process." Hill urged the international community, particularly the PRC, to continue pressing the DPRK to return to the six-way talks.

[\(return to top\)](#)

2. US on DPRK Human Rights and Nuclear Talks

Joongang Ilbo ("U.S. SAYS INCLUDE RIGHTS IN TALKS ", 2005-03-29) reported that the DPRK's nuclear weapons program and the country's human rights abuses should be dealt together in six-party talks, a senior US State Department official said Monday. "You are trying to pursue several different objectives at once, and we need to pursue both denuclearization and human rights at the same time," said Michael Kozak, acting assistant secretary for democracy, human rights and labor. "It's not an either-or proposition."

[\(return to top\)](#)

3. Sino-DPRK Relations

Agence France Presse ("CHINESE DELEGATION IN NORTH KOREA AS NUCLEAR TALKS HANG IN BALANCE", 2005-03-29) reported that a PRC delegation arrived in the DPRK Tuesday. The "goodwill delegation", headed by deputy secretary of the PRC Communist Party's Central Commission for Discipline Inspection Ma Wen, was invited by the International Affairs Department of the Workers' Party of Korea. Foreign ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said he was not sure whether the nuclear standoff was on the delegation's agenda. "This visit is a normal visit between the parties of China and DPRK based on the plan for bilateral exchanges. I believe the main purpose is to discuss the two parties' exchanges and cooperation."

[\(return to top\)](#)

4. ROK on Inter-Korean Talks

Joongang Ilbo ("UNOFFICIAL DELEGATION HOPES TO RESTART NORTH DIALOGUE", 2005-03-29)

reported that a senior-level ROK delegation will visit Kaesong today in a bid to restart talks between the DPRK and ROK outside of economic relations. Since August, relations other than those dealing with the two countries' joint economic projects have been suspended. The delegation is part of Juamhoe, an informal organization of Seoul officials who accompanied then-President Kim Dae-jung to the 2000 summit meeting in Pyongyang. A Seoul official said that the ROK delegation will aim at resuming inter-Korean dialogue, possibly arranging a meeting between a Juamhoe member and DPRK leader Kim Jong-il.

[\(return to top\)](#)

5. Inter - Korean Economic Cooperation

Asia Pulse/Yonhap News ("KOREAS PUSH FOR JOINT INDUSTRIAL PARK IN PYONGYANG", 2005-03-29) reported that the ROK and DPRK are working to set up another joint industrial complex, this time in Pyongyang and for small- and medium-sized companies, a business association in Seoul said Tuesday. "We have forged an agreement with representatives from the North to push for the construction of an industrial complex in Pyongyang," said Kim Young-il, who heads an inter-Korean business investment association. "The North will provide the site, labor, and raw materials, while the South will supply capital, technology and other facilities," Kim said.

[\(return to top\)](#)

6. ROK on Aid to the DPRK

Yonhap news ("SOUTH OPPOSITION LEGISLATORS IN NORTH KOREA FOR AID PROJECT", 2005-03-29) reported that four opposition legislators left for the DPRK on Tuesday to support an aid project by a ROK civic group, officials at the organization said. Representatives Lee Jae-oh, Kim Moon-soo, Bae Il-do and Kim Ae-sil of main opposition Grand National Party are on a three-day visit to the DPRK to support the project that will provide DPRK homes with some 50,000 heaters before the end of next year. "The fastest way to resolve the worsening tension between South and North Korea amid the North Korean nuclear crisis is through increased exchanges and humanitarian aid," the organization said in a released statement.

[\(return to top\)](#)

7. DPRK on Nuclear Program

Yonhap news ("N.KOREA DISMISSED U.S. CLAIM FUNDS WERE SIPHONED FOR NUKE PROGRAM", 2005-03-29) reported that a DPRK official Tuesday dismissed a US researcher's allegation that ROK money was diverted to fund nuclear weapons development in the DPRK, Pyongyang's news agency reported. "Those arguments are not worthy of comment," a spokesperson for the Asia-Pacific Peace Committee said in reply to a question from the Central News Agency, the agency said. "Those allegations showed clearly their ignorance and lack of common sense," the spokesperson said. "Our nuclear weapons were developed on the base of an independent economy."

[\(return to top\)](#)

8. DPRK Economics

Itar-Tass ("NORTH KOREAN CURRENCY SINKS TO HISTORIC LOW LEVEL", 2005-03-29) reported that exchange rate of the DPRK's national currency, the won, has sunk to a historic low level since

the day of emergence of the DPRK. Runaway inflation and the resultant price leaps are among the major social and economic headaches for this country. Since an average salary in the DPRK stands at around 6,000 won, the rapid depreciation of national money may bring about grave social problems, experts say.

[\(return to top\)](#)

9. DPRK Bird Flu Outbreak

Donga Ilbo ("NORTH KOREA SLAUGHTERED 10 MILLION CHICKENS", 2005-03-29) reported that it is reported that the DPRK has slaughtered around 10 million chickens nurtured in the Pyongyang region after the outbreak of bird flu in the area's chicken farms. About 18.73 million chickens are raised all across the country. Based on the comments of influential figures who recently visited the DPRK, a reliable resource of DPRK issues said, "The North decided to slaughter all the chickens raised in Pyongyang as its last resort to prevent the spread of the bird flu."

[\(return to top\)](#) Joongang Ilbo ("NORTH SAID TO ACT ON FEAR OF BIRD FLU", 2005-03-29) reported that ROK intelligence sources said yesterday that the DPRK was apparently afraid of the spread of bird flu to top officials when it canceled an annual meeting of its highest legislative body earlier this month. The DPRK's state-run media issued an unusual announcement on March 4, saying that the regular session of the Supreme People's Assembly, which was scheduled to take place on March 9, had been postponed. "Analyzing all information we've got so far, the intelligence community concluded the delay was caused by the avian influenza outbreak," a ranking official of the ROK's Ministry of Unification said. [\(return to top\)](#)

10. ROK on DPRK Bird Flu Outbreak

Yonhap news ("SOUTH GROUP OFFERS TO HELP N KOREA TACKLE BIRD FLU", 2005-03-29) reported that a ROK civic organization offered to help DPRK contain the recent outbreak of bird influenza in the DPRK. Kang Young-sik, a director at the Korean Sharing Movement, said that the group will make the offer at an inter-Korean agricultural meeting Wednesday in the DPRK border city of Kaesong. "If Pyongyang asks for help, we will contact experts and various organizations to devise the best way to offer the support," Kang said.

[\(return to top\)](#)

11. PRC on DPRK Bird Flu Outbreak

Kyodo ("CHINA TO CONSIDER HELPING N. KOREA OVER BIRD FLU IF REQUESTED", 2005-03-29) reported that the PRC will "actively consider" providing assistance to the DPRK for combating the recent outbreak of bird flu in the country if Pyongyang requests it, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said Tuesday. "We have yet to receive a request for assistance or aid from China," Liu Jianchao told a regular press conference. "If it is made, we will actively consider the issue," he said.

[\(return to top\)](#) Xinhua ("HK SUSPENDS IMPORT OF LIVE BIRDS, POULTRY MEAT FROM DPRK ", 2005-03-29) reported that a spokesman of the Hong Kong government said on Tuesday that the government would suspend the import of live birds and poultry meat from the DPRK with immediate effect. The spokesman for Hong Kong's Health, Welfare and Food Bureau said the decision was made in view of the reports released by the Korea Central News Agency that a strain of highly pathogenic avian influenza was detected in chicken farms near Pyongyang and Hadang. "No live birds and poultry meat will be allowed to be imported from DPRK until further notice," the

spokesman said. [\(return to top\)](#)

12. DPRK on Agricultural Aid

Korea Times ("NK NEEDS FOREIGN AID TO BOOST AGRICULTURAL OUTPUT", 2005-03-29) reported that the DPRK's resolution to boost agricultural output this year can be achieved only when it receives enough foreign assistance, especially from the ROK, the Unification Ministry said Tuesday. "The North is trying to ease its food shortage by producing more than 5 million tons of grain this year," a ministry official said. "But it will be impossible to reach this target figure without foreign aid."

[\(return to top\)](#)

13. DPRK on Foreign Aid

Itar-Tass ("N KOREA RESTRICTS INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS ACTIVITY", 2005-03-29) reported that the DPRK has tightened restrictions on the traveling inside the country for staffers of international humanitarian organizations, a spokesman for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said in Beijing on Tuesday. According to John Sparrow, the number of permissions to visit DPRK hospitals and other medical institutions has been almost halved over the past few months without any explanations from the authorities. Representatives of international organizations have no opportunity now to control how humanitarian aid arriving in the DPRK from abroad is used, which may make donor countries reduce the financing of humanitarian aid or refuse aid altogether, the spokesman said.

[\(return to top\)](#)

14. ROK on DPRK Human Rights

Christian Science Monitor ("S. KOREA BARS SECRET VIDEO OF THE NORTH", 2005-03-29) reported that rare video footage of summary executions in the DPRK - a practice considered routine in the DPRK but never captured on film - was taken by hidden camera March 1 and 2, and smuggled through the PRC to the ROK. At the time, refugee groups in Seoul were ecstatic. It looked like a human rights slam-dunk: yet in a twist not anticipated by underground groups that carried off the filming, ROK TV authorities have not let the video be broadcast.

[\(return to top\)](#)

15. UN on DPRK Defectors

Asia Pulse ("PROTECTION FOR N KOREA DEFECTORS, SAYS UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR", 2005-03-29) reported that the United Nations' Special Rapporteur on human rights in the DPRK recommended international protection for defectors from the impoverished country here Tuesday. Vitit Muntarbhorn, who was appointed to the position by the UN Commission on Human Rights last year, said in his official report that the forced repatriation of DPRK refugees should be stopped, while refuge camps or protection facilities should be provided to them.

[\(return to top\)](#)

16. Russo-DPRK Wildlife Protection

Vladivostok News ("RUSSIANS, N. KOREANS PAVE WAY TO TRACK LEOPARDS", 2005-03-29) reported that when it comes to saving the Far Eastern leopard, one of the rarest cats in the world, highly secluded DPRK shows a desire to unite efforts and opens doors to Russian ecologists. Denis Smirnov, supervisor of the forest program at the Far Eastern branch of WWF, recently paid a week's visit to a small coastal segment of the Korean Free Economic Zone. "The main purpose of our trip was to find out if there were regions in North Korea suitable for the flourishing of the Far East Leopard and if there are possibilities to conduct research in this isolated country," Smirnov shared.

[\(return to top\)](#)

17. US Troop Realignment

Asia Pulse/Yonhap ("U.S. ARMY CAMP CLOSES IN SOUTH KOREA", 2005-03-29) reported that a US military base, Camp Page in central northern ROK, was closed down Tuesday. Tasked with providing aviation support to the US Army's 2nd Infantry, Camp Page, located in the city of Chuncheon, Gangwon Province, 85 kilometers northeast of Seoul, held its closing ceremony. In accordance with the US military's relocation plan, its soldiers and equipment have been relocated to other bases in the ROK and the ROK Army will receive the rights to manage the base in November.

[\(return to top\)](#)

18. ROK on Japanese-ROK Territorial Dispute

Joongang Ilbo ("BLUE HOUSE TURNS UP HEAT ON JAPANESE", 2005-03-29) reported that the Blue House sharpened its attack against Japan yesterday over the Dokdo islands conflict and the dispute over how Japan views its historical role in Korea. The Blue House public affairs office put out a newsletter saying, "The issue of Dokdo is not just a territorial dispute, but an issue of restoring Korea's sovereignty." The newsletter follows President Roh Moo-hyun's "open letter to the people" last week that said the ROK would press Japan to atone for its actions during the time it ruled Korea.

[\(return to top\)](#)

19. DPRK on ROK-Japanese Territorial Dispute

Yonhap news ("NORTH KOREA CLAIMS JAPAN HAD SECRET TRAINING TO INVADE DOKDO", 2005-03-29) reported that the DPRK claimed Tuesday that the Japanese military conducted a secret training in 2000 to invade the ROK islets of Dokdo. Rodong Sinmun, organ of the DPRK Workers' Party, said that Japan recently had a reconnaissance plane approach the ROK's airspace near Dokdo, partly displaying its desire to seize the ROK soil.

[\(return to top\)](#)

20. Japan on Territorial Disputes

Donga Ilbo ("JAPANESE EDUCATION MINISTER CLAIMS DOKDO BELONGS TO JAPAN", 2005-0-29) reported that Japanese education minister Nariaki Nakayama said on March 29 that Dokdo Island and the Senkaku Islands should be described as Japanese territory in "Teaching Methods," which provides standards for writing textbooks, according to the Kyoto news agency. Nakayama

insisted that “the existing teaching methods do not cover what territories belong to Japan. The revised method should not fail to include that point,” in a meeting of the Council for Culture, Education, and Science held on the same day.

[\(return to top\)](#)

21. Sino-Japanese Territorial Dispute

James Brooke ("DRAWING THE LINE ON ENERGY", 2005-03-29) reported that when Japan commissions a survey of what is hidden below the contested waters of the East China Sea, the PRC coast guard ships treat the surveyors as spies, radioing warnings to leave and shadowing the ship for days on end. In days of sharply higher energy prices, long-dormant border disputes have suddenly come alive for Japan, the world's second-largest energy-consuming nation after the US. In talks in Tokyo on Monday between Japan and the PRC, the world's second- and third-largest oil consumers, Japanese negotiators again demanded that the PRC share its drilling data or drop the project, news agencies reported. The PRC side rejected the demands and repeated an earlier proposal for a joint venture.

[\(return to top\)](#)

22. PRC, ROK on Japanese UNSC Bid

Choson Ilbo ("KOREANS, CHINESE IN MASS OPPOSITION TO JAPAN'S UN BID", 2005-03-29) reported that grassroots ROK and PRC opposition to Japan's bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council is growing fast. In ROK, 24 civic groups, including the Young Korean Academy, the Dokdo Resident in Seoul Association, Korean YMCA and Transparency International declared at an event at the Young Korean Academy auditorium Monday the start of a signature campaign against Tokyo's bid for a permanent council seat. Meanwhile, the PRC's Xinhua News Agency reported that as of Tuesday 9 million Chinese had signed up to an online campaign opposing Japan's ambitions for permanent Security Council membership, and the number was likely to rise to 10 million.

[\(return to top\)](#)

23. US on ROK-Japanese Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("EXPERT BEMOANS SEOUL'S ATTITUDE TO THREE-WAY ALLIANCE", 2005-03-29) reported that a ROK expert attached to the US Congress has told Japan's Sankei Shimbun that ROK criticism of Japan hurt not just Seoul-Tokyo ties but also showed Seoul at odds with the essence of the US-Japan alliance. Congressional adviser Larry A. Niksch told the paper's Tuesday edition there were concerns that the three-way ROK-US-Japan alliance -- the pillar of post-war US policy in Asia -- could collapse. Niksch said the ROK and US were clearly at loggerheads over Japan's role in the region.

[\(return to top\)](#)

24. Asia-Pacific Environmental Cooperation Initiative

Korea Times ("ASIA-PACIFIC MINISTERS ADOPT SEOUL INITIATIVE FOR `GREEN GROWTH'", 2005-03-29) reported that environment and development ministers of 52 Asia-Pacific countries on Tuesday adopted the Seoul Initiative to strengthen cooperation in ensuring environmentally sustainable economic growth. Participants promised their commitment to sustainable development

at the close of the fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific (MCED 2005) which was held at the Lotte Hotel in central Seoul for six days. The ROK hosted the conference organized by the United Nations' Economic and Social Commission in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

[\(return to top\)](#)

25. Australian-US Relations

Australian Financial Review ("US A THREAT TO PEACE: POLL", 2005-03-29) reported that most Australians believe that US foreign policies are as much of a potential threat as Islamic fundamentalism, according to a poll by the Lowy Institute. The comprehensive poll of public attitudes on foreign policy and security issues also showed that Australians were far more relaxed about the PRC's growing power with only about a third concerned about it. In contrast, some 57 percent of those surveyed were worried or very worried about US foreign policy and Islamic fundamentalism as a potential threat to Australia.

[\(return to top\)](#)

26. Cross Strait Relations

Agence France Presse ("TAIWAN PARLIAMENT SPEAKER TO INVITE CHINESE COUNTERPART FOR VISIT", 2005-03-29) reported that Taiwan's parliamentary speaker said he will propose inviting his PRC counterpart for a visit to improve cross-strait ties after Beijing enacted a new law targeting the island. Wang Jin-pyng, a Kuomintang (KMT) party vice chairman, said he would also send a parliamentary delegation to the mainland in order "to understand the atmosphere after (the PRC's) adoption of the anti-secession law". "We will consider inviting Wu Bangguo, chairman of the National People's Congress' standing committee, to visit Taiwan. It would help promote cross-strait goodwill and peace," he told reporters.

[\(return to top\)](#) Los Angeles Times ("TAIWAN OPPOSITION PARTY PAYS OFFICIAL VISIT TO CHINA", 2005-03-29) reported that a delegation of Taiwan's opposition Nationalists arrived in mainland PRC on Monday for the first official visit by the party. The trip comes on the heels of a massive weekend rally in Taipei, the capital of Taiwan, by several hundred thousand people to protest Beijing's passage of an anti-secession law. The Nationalist Party was once the archenemy of Beijing. Now it hopes to play the role of peacemaker. "They are trying to send the message that the KMT is for peaceful resolution of cross-strait tensions, despite a long history of misunderstandings and high emotions," said Andrew Yang, head of the Chinese Council of Advanced Policy Studies, a Taipei think tank. [\(return to top\)](#)

27. US on PRC Military Expansion

The Associated Press ("CHINA MILITARY EXPANSION WORRIES U.S.", 2005-03-29) reported that a month after assuming command of US forces in the Pacific, Adm. William J. Fallon on Tuesday voiced apprehension about the PRC's military expansion and its intentions toward Taiwan, while promising "whatever assets we may have" to Southeast Asian allies fighting terrorism. Fallon said his priorities as head of the largest of nine US military commands would be fighting the war on terror and building regional military cooperation so "we can put ourselves in a position where we can respond quickly." He also noted the PRC's increasing military presence and the repercussions for Taiwan.

[\(return to top\)](#)

28. US on PRC Human Rights

The Associated Press ("PAKISTAN, CHINESE HUMAN RIGHTS CRITICIZED", 2005-03-29) reported that the State Department renewed its criticism of the human rights records of the PRC on Monday in a report that followed US decisions to avoid a showdown with the PRC on the way it treats its people. The PRC has amended its constitution to protect human rights and has adopted legal reforms for monitoring the government. But the report said "it is unclear how or to what extent the constitutional amendment and other legal reforms will be enforced." President Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney and other senior administration officials constantly raise human rights issues in their meetings with PRC leaders, the report said.

[\(return to top\)](#)

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